

Standard 3-5: The students will demonstrate an understanding of the major developments in South Carolina in the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century.

3.5.2 Summarize the effects of the state and local laws that are commonly known as Jim Crow laws on African Americans in particular and on South Carolinians as a whole. (H, P, E, G)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

Students were introduced to the concept of racial tension and its causes previously in 3rd grade when they learned about the plantation system, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. They will have no prior knowledge of Jim Crow laws specifically.

In 4th grade, students will illustrate how ideals of equality set forth in the Declaration of Independence were slow to take hold as evident in the Three-Fifths Compromise and the Fugitive Slave Acts (4-4.6).

In 5th grade, students will explain the purposes and motivations behind the rise of discriminatory laws and groups and their effect on the rights and opportunities of African Americans in different regions of the United States. (5-1.5)

In 8th grade, students will summarize the political, economic, and social conditions in South Carolina following the end of Reconstruction, including the development of the 1895 constitution, and the evolution of race relations and Jim Crow laws (8-5.1).

In United States History, students will summarize the progress made by African Americans during Reconstruction and the subsequent reversals brought by Reconstruction's end, including ... the rise of anti-African American factions and legislation (USHC-4.5).

It is essential for students to know

When Federal troops withdrew from the South ending Reconstruction, conditions deteriorated for African Americans. Segregation and discrimination had long been accepted practices in South Carolina. Schools had been segregated from the time of their establishment during Reconstruction. But within ten years of the end of Reconstruction, the South Carolina legislature passed Jim Crow laws to provide a *legal* means to segregate African Americans in South Carolina. Jim Crow laws were a way for South Carolina to circumvent the rights established for African Americans by the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States. The thirteenth amendment abolished slavery. The fourteenth amendment secured rights of citizenship for African Americans including due process and equal protection of the laws. Jim Crow laws meant that African Americans could not ride in the same railroad cars, or use the same public restrooms or water fountains. They had to sit in the balcony at theatres and could not eat in the same restaurants as whites. Every aspect of life was separate. As time passed and technology changed, Jim Crow was applied to new circumstances (for example, to buses and movie theaters).

Other laws were also passed to limit African Americans' right to vote as protected in the 15th amendment. African Americans were required to pass a literacy test on the Constitution. Even if they could read the Constitution, the white examiner declared that they were illiterate and therefore could not vote. Voters were also required to pay a poll tax before they could vote. This was particularly hard for poor sharecroppers, many of whom were African Americans. Poor illiterate whites were allowed to vote because of the 'grandfather clause' that said if their grandfather could vote before the Civil War then so could they. African Americans who protested these laws were intimidated by terrorist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

Racial discrimination was now written into the state law and could be enforced by the state government. Because their right to vote was denied, African Americans had no representation in this government and so could not protect their rights. The national government did not interfere in state government to protect African American citizens. The Supreme Court ruled that “separate but equal” was constitutional. However, conditions were not equal.

It is not essential for students to know all of the circumstance in which segregation was practiced. They do not need to know that Jim Crow laws were passed by the followers of Ben Tillman in an effort to be sure that the conservative faction of the Democratic Party could not appeal to the African American voter and therefore win an election. They do not need to know that the Tillmanites used racism as a means of consolidating their own political power. Students do not need to know that the literacy test and poll tax were written into the South Carolina constitution of 1895 that replaced the Reconstruction era constitution of 1868. They do not need to know the degree to which lynchings were used to intimidate African Americans. They do not need to know the names of the Supreme Court case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, that declared “separate but equal” to be constitutional.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessment would require students to **summarize** the effect of Jim Crow laws on African Americans and South Carolina. Students should be to generalize the aspects of Jim Crow laws that were used effectively to suppress African American rights. However, appropriate assessments should also require students to **identify** specific Jim Crow laws and limitations on the right to vote.

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